4/20/74

Dear personfication of arrogance,

When I have no income, even a dime is a burden.

On the one hand you persist, which is a virtue in those who have some prospect of achieving something by their persistence. There is nothing more persuasive to me than your correspondence that there is no prospect of your doing anything to advance the area of the work in which you profess zeal.

Most have better uses for their chins than you.

I have indeed sung solidarity with brothers only to learn that they were not brothers. The learning was hard and painful.

I deny you no virtue. Rather do I encourage you to earn it by not lusting to steal the labor of another.

Would you have me orate that you were so arrogant you equated thievery and principle?

You are old enough and experienced enough to comprehend the wisdom of the Indian saying about walking in the moccasins of the other man.

Thomas, I said goodbye and I ignored your last letter. Pray do not require of me that I leave for the future further record of your unseemly self-esteem in which there is a decade for evaluation of your failure to do what you could have helped do.

Pray do not continue to be a foolish and self-important old man. You are totally ignorant of the degree to which I work with others who have the capability, not the self-concept, of doing something that can move us forward. If you have the remotest notion of what I am doing in court and with whom and how you would have a glimmer.

In this, I risk what I must, including myself.

Time and events have passed you by. I won't do anything about it and you can't.

But you can and you do defame yourself. I do wish you would not.

I was tempted to ignore this letter, too. But as I have no doubt that in your own eyes and mind you are sincere, likewise have I none that there is no possibility that at your age and with all that you have NOT done in the past decade it is too late now. You simply can't catch up now.

Neither spring nor any other sophistry will exalt my resolve. I have not persevered to this point for such immaturity or irresponsibility.

Two postscripts.

Read me no lectures on Chile. I was part of that struggle decades ago. It is I who provided those parts of that one of FDR's fireside chats. And in the present, with all the other projects on which I am engaged, I have developed on this what has not yet been in print (despite my efforts). In time and when it is possible it will be.

You have a splinter in the heel, Schilles? Hot water is not always the best treatment.

Last night I was temporarily hospitalized. I am supposed to be taking it easy. Were this not the case and were it possible for me not to be uncomfortable and in pain other than sitting bolt upright I'd probably have ignored this letter, too.

When I am again able to do what I have been doing, I hope in a matter of days only, I will return to it. I will not stop, and I will not be deterred by a self-important man whose time and capabilities have passed except in his own self-concept.

I do, truly, hate to address you this way. But I also detest your wasted weight on my own aging back. Would you be no more than a burden? Really sincerely,